

Response

A. Introduction

Claims 30-37 will be pending in the application following entry of the foregoing amendments. Although the numbering within Section 6 of the Office Action is confused, the Examiner appears to have finally rejected (apparatus) claims 1, 3, 6-14, 17-22, 24-26, and 28-29 as obvious over combined disclosures of U.S. Patent No. 6,843,197 to Nixon and various other patents. By contrast, (method) claims 30-31 were rejected solely as indefinite, with the Examiner objecting to Applicant's inclusion in claim 30 of the language of subsection (a)(i).

In response thereto, Applicant proposes without prejudice to cancel the apparatus claims and to delete the objected-to language of subsection (a)(i) from method claim 30. Applicant believes these amendments, upon entry, would resolve the Examiner's rejections and render claims 30-31 allowable. Applicant also proposes to add claims 32-37, each of which depends directly or indirectly from claim 30 and for at least this reason should be allowable as well.

B. Response to Interview Summary

Applicant confirms the substance of the interview of January 7, 2010 as reflected in the Interview Summary of the Examiner. In particular, Applicant confirms that Examiner's statement that no requirement for restriction between independent apparatus claim 1 and independent method claim 30 would be proper. Applicant confirms as well the Examiner's belief that, as drafted, (apparatus) claim 1 allows him to cite the Nixon patent whereas (method) claim 30 does not. Although Applicant disagreed (and continues to disagree) with the Examiner's position

respecting apparatus claim 1, he currently believes the matter to be moot in view of the proposed cancellation of all apparatus claims. Moreover, Applicant disagreed (and continues to disagree) with the Examiner's position as to definiteness of otherwise-allowable method claim 30, although that issue too is moot in view of proposed deletion of the objected-to language.

Conclusion

Applicant requests that the Examiner enter the foregoing amendments and allow claims 30-37 and that a patent containing these claims issue in due course.

Respectfully submitted,

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